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## Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O Lord, our God, by Your will we came into being, and at Your command, when the right hour is come, we shall one day leave this world. Let Your spirit lead our Senators today. May they increase in self-forgetfulness, in simplicity, in courage, and in trust, so that each day they will approach nearer to Your likeness. Lord, help them to offer themselves afresh to be used in Your service. Show them Your way and may they obey Your presence. Give wisdom to the perplexed, fresh vigor to the discouraged, and a clearer vision to all who seek Your will.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable TOM UDALL led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, February 25, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator

from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, if any, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 160, the District of Columbia House Voting Rights Act. Rollcall votes are expected to occur today and tomorrow in an effort to advance this bill to passage this week so we can turn to the consideration of the omnibus appropriations bill next week.

Mr. President, you will note that we have had no morning business. The reason for that is we are very in tune to finish this legislation. I want everyone to have ample opportunity to offer any amendment that they want on this bill. There should be no excuse. We have got all morning, all afternoon, all evening, all day tomorrow, but we are going to finish the bill one way or the other.

I hope we can do it the right way, the easy way, so we do not have to file cloture on it. This is a bill that should advance. Senator LIEBERMAN is so knowledgeable about Senate procedures that he will protect everyone's rights. But we cannot imagine what the amendments are going to be; they have to be offered. We have heard a lot of talk about amendments being offered, some germane, some not germane. But let's get it done and move on.

I do not want to have to file cloture on this bill. There is no reason to file cloture. If people have amendments,

they want to improve the legislation, let them offer the amendments. But if we do not have a lot of activity on this legislation, I will file cloture today for a Friday cloture vote. If we are unable to complete action on the bill tomorrow, Senators should be prepared to vote on Friday, even though it was previously announced that there would be no votes on that day. So everyone should be alerted that we may have votes on Friday.

There is no reason in the world that this simple piece of legislation cannot be completed. I am surprised we have to go into this tomorrow, quite frankly. We should finish it today—that would also be good—and we could do our work that we have scheduled for the weekend, and we could move this bill so we can start on that on Friday, because, as I said yesterday, we have to complete action on the omnibus spending bill by next Friday, the reason being that the continuing resolution runs out at that time.

Senator COCHRAN and Senator INOUE have worked hard to get the bill to this point. It has been available for everyone for days now. It is on our Web site. Everyone can read every word of it. All of the so-called earmarks, the congressionally directed spending are there. We can look at them, know who asked for them.

The earmarks are down by 50 percent from what they were. The amount of dollars in earmarks, congressionally directed spending, is way down from 4 percent to 1 percent. So let's move forward on the legislation we are dealing with here today and get this done as quickly as possible.

Because this is a 6-week work period, we have a lot of work to do. Some of us were out late last night at President Obama's speech.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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